

**Common Ground**

**By U.S. Representative Stephanie Herseth, D-SD  
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All of South Dakota should celebrate the decision to save Ellsworth Air Force Base from closure. That victory means jobs and economic prosperity for the region and the entire state. I was proud to join with Senators Johnson and Thune, Governor Rounds, the Ellsworth Task Force, and local leaders to fight successfully on behalf of Ellsworth.

After a series of tough, divisive elections in South Dakota, it is truly inspiring to witness and be a part of a cooperative, bipartisan effort that achieved real results for our state. I have heard from countless South Dakotans who appreciate this spirit of working together, and I want to see it continue. South Dakotans know that there will always be some issues that divide us, but that we are much stronger when we can join forces on those issues that unite us.

I was proud recently to bring two leading members of Congress to South Dakota on issues that are important to our state. It just so happens that these two leaders are both Republicans – Rep. Bob Goodlatte, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, and Rep. Greg Walden, the Chairman of the House Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forestry.

I brought Chairman Goodlatte to South Dakota a couple of weeks ago to tour an ethanol plant, and to meet with ag researchers at SDSU, EROS scientists, and ag commodity leaders in Sioux Falls. Bob is from Virginia, and the farmers in his district are much more likely to raise turkeys than corn. In fact, until this year, he has never been a proponent of ethanol. But in earning his trust, I was able to help him better understand the potential of ethanol and to address his concerns about the cost of corn for his turkey growers and processors. Clearly, having a good working relationship with the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee is important to South Dakota. While we continue to disagree on some issues, like mandatory COOL, we've found common ground on other issues because we've looked for it.

I was also pleased to bring Chairman Walden to South Dakota for a field hearing on forestry issues in the Black Hills. The hearing, held in the Hill City High School Theater, covered a range of topics affecting the health and management of Black Hills National Forest including preventing wildfire, implementation of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, and recovery and

restoration efforts after fires have occurred.

Additionally, I've worked very closely with Tim Johnson and John Thune on a number of issues important to South Dakota. As a delegation, we agree on plenty. Mandatory COOL, veterans funding, ethanol, rural water projects, economic development and more. On the long overdue multi-year transportation bill, we remained in close contact to ensure that South Dakota was well represented, and that communication paid off. We were able to increase the total amount of funds available to South Dakota by getting together early, developing a plan and working together throughout the entire process. The Transportation Bill is historic and a big victory for South Dakota. But we were only able to accomplish what we accomplished because everyone in the delegation worked together from the beginning.

As disappointing as the partisanship of recent years has been, the willingness of some to work together recently been equally refreshing. I've been able to find some really good people – across South Dakota and in the Congress – who are willing to put politics aside and actually get to work solving our problems. The fact is that bipartisanship works, and I will continue to make it work on behalf of South Dakota.